

Missed Connection

It's been one year and I've forgotten how to speak.
Each "Can I hold your hand?" and "Do you smell the lavender?"
is mauled in my throat, regurgitated into water logged debris.
Words get caught in the ridges on the roof of my mouth
like a drowned paper boat to a rusted storm drain—a failed
actualization, a traveler lost on their way along the plains
of my withered tongue, over the limbo hills of my sweeping lips.

I inhale each syllable back into my lungs:
the only particles I don't stall my breath around,
the only lovers I shelter with open arms. I romance
the way they mingle with each gasp and sigh
and scream and laugh and sob. Rattled music
washes over them like the six frenzied seas
of crimson ink flirting with a love letter
before they take their leave, bidding an *à bientôt*
to their soulmate of the night, promising
"same time, same place," knowing well and good
it was a lie as sweet as cherry wine.

- Jaden Fong